Witness: Jurisdiction:	Katherine Strauch Sullivan Baltimore County
Bill:	SB493 Elections – Ranked–Choice Voting – Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028
Sponsor:	Senator Kagan
Position:	OPPOSE

Recent polling suggests that a majority of Americans on both sides of the aisle fear for the survival of the American democratic system. Ranked-choice voting (RCV), also called "instant runoff voting," would be harmful to American elections.

Below is the evidence to back up that claim.

- 1. ERROR RATES FOR RCV ELECTIONS REMAIN HIGHER THAN THOSE OF TRADITIONAL ELECTIONS. Instructions for RCV ballots are generally cumbersome, often confusing voters. This results in more citizens having their votes thrown away because of an overly complex system.
- 2. WITH RANKED-CHOICE VOTING, NOT ALL VOTES COUNT.

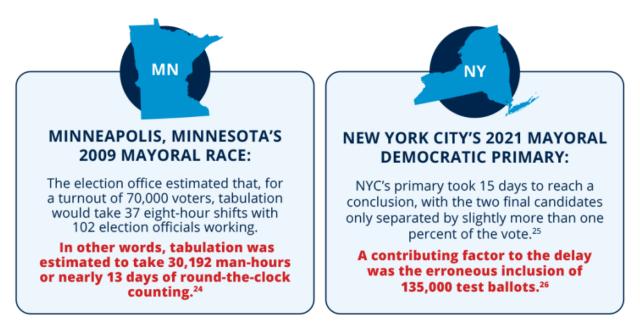
"Exhausted ballots" in RCV elections do not count towards the final tally. Because of ballot exhaustion, winners of RCV races do not necessarily represent the choice of all voters who participated. Below are two races supporting this claim:



3. RANK-CHOICE VOTING HAVE LOWER VOTER TURNOUT RATES.

A multitude of studies support this claim but to name one, a study of San Francisco elections from 1995 to 2011 revealed a strong relationship between a decline in voter turnout and the adoption of RCV. Because RCV is more complex than traditional voting, the system inherently discourages new and infrequent voters from participating. Between voter confusion, high rates of ballot exhaustion, and the difficulty of tabulating the results, the RCV risks are not worth the few rewards.

4. **RANKED-CHOICE VOTING CHANGES AND DELAYS THE ELECTION COUNTING PROCESS.** Because of the convoluted and centralized tabulation process, counting the final results in RCV elections is time consuming, and rarely are election results available on Election Day.



SAY NO TO RANK CHOICE VOTING IN MARYLAND. The good news is that eliminating and restricting RCV has bipartisan support in state governments across the country. **Such a needlessly complicated voting system leads to voter confusion, lower turnout, and slower election results.** Strengthening trust in the election process should not be a partisan issue. Banning ranked-choice voting is a measure that everyone ought to support to protect election integrity.

WE ASK THAT THE COMMITTEE OPPOSE SB493.